

Village of Somers
Proceedings from the Regular Board Meeting April 28, 2026

President Stoner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

President Stoner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: President Stoner, Trustees Karl Ostby, Ben Harbach, Scott Fredrick, Jackie Nelson, Joe Smith and Trustee Aupperle attended via video conference. Also present: Administrator Jim Hurley, Clerk/Treasurer Wendy Burnette, Assistant Administrator Kevin Poirier and Chief Andersen.

Consent and Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting April 8, Regular meetings on April 14, 2026, Vouchers dated April 9, 16 and 23rd, 2026.

Trustee Smith moved to approve Minutes of Special Meeting April 8, Regular meetings on April 14, 2026, Vouchers dated April 9, 16 and 23rd, 2026.

Seconded by Trustee Ostby

Motion carried. 7-0 vote

Correspondence: Correspondence: Public Service Commission letter regarding Red Oak Ridge Energy Center, Kenosha County Executive's letter to the Public Service Commission regarding the County's Battery Energy Storage System Ordinance

Citizen Comments

Administrator Hurley read aloud the rules that were to be followed during public comments.

John Hobson 6442 11th Place

Mr. Hobson addressed the Board regarding the recent referendum outcome and the future of fire and EMS services. He stated his opinion that the Village should accept the grant funding and allow it to proceed, emphasizing that fire service operations are currently strained due to increasing call volumes, insufficient staffing, reliance on paid-on-call personnel, and high turnover rates.

He noted that the Village is investing resources into training personnel who often leave for other departments and stressed the need to create an environment that attracts and retains firefighters and EMS staff. He further stated that emergency medical service calls continue to rise each year, based on his experience as a paramedic firefighter since 1977.

He informed the Board that the department required outside assistance on 61 occasions in the past year, indicating staffing challenges. He urged the Board to move forward rather than reduce services, noting anticipated retirements and the need to maintain adequate staffing levels, including the ability to deploy a third ambulance.

He emphasized that emergency response times are critical and that delays can have serious consequences for residents. He stated that, while not always a legal obligation, there is a moral responsibility to provide timely emergency services.

In closing, he encouraged the Board to support the development of a strong and reliable fire department that meets the needs of the community, rather than risk declining service level

Christopher Bigley 9925 15th Ave.

Mr. Bigley addressed the Village President and Board regarding the failed referendum to hire additional fire personnel, focusing on concerns with the process and discussion of potentially returning the SAFER grant. Mr. Bigley urged the Village to retain the grant and move forward with hiring.

While he voted in favor of the referendum, he expressed concerns about the financial presentation and public perception, describing it as poor planning. Based on prior experience in fire service leadership, Mr. Bigley cited three main reasons for the referendum's failure: the way it was presented, general public frustration with growth and development issues, and the financial burden on residents.

He encouraged the Board to make the necessary decisions to secure the grant and hire additional personnel, noting that declining the grant could impact future funding opportunities. He also highlighted future resource needs tied to community growth and emphasized the importance of planning ahead.

Gregg Sinnen 750 Green Bay Road

Mr. Sinnen addressed the Board regarding the liquor license review process. He referenced discussion from the prior work session and expressed concern that focus shifted away from establishment liquor licenses to bartender licenses.

He noted that prior Village staff and legal counsel had expressed concerns about implementing a more structured system. He recalled a past presentation indicating that the current process lacks consistency and adequate review, with many questions arising only at the meeting when licenses are considered.

He emphasized the need for a clear and consistent system, stating that Board members should seek answers to questions in advance and coordinate with relevant entities, such as the Sheriff's Department and court staff. He stated that regardless of the system used, it must be well-developed and consistently followed.

He suggested exploring a demerit-based system for license holders with prior issues, similar to a graduated structure, and recommended consulting with legal counsel and other municipalities to ensure compliance. He encouraged the Board to fully develop and refine a process rather than revisiting the issue annually without resolution.

Brian Gallagher 264 7th Place

Mr. Gallagher addressed the Board regarding prior discussions and current conditions on 7th Place. He expressed concern about a lack of decorum at a previous meeting when the issue was discussed and stated that residents felt their concerns were dismissed.

He stated there is no documentation supporting prior claims that an offer was made to pave 7th Place in 2017, noting he reviewed Village records with staff assistance and found no record of such action. He also indicated that residents were not presented with or declined any formal proposal.

He reported attempting to meet with Village officials to discuss the matter but was unsuccessful. He reiterated concerns about the Village referring to 7th Place as a private driveway while allowing or encouraging public use to access a nearby park.

He stated he has obtained a permit from the Department of Transportation to improve the roadway at his own expense and plans to complete the work by late June. He indicated that he and neighboring property owners intend to post signage designating the road as private and may pursue claims if damage occurs due to public use.

In closing, he stated his original request was for basic maintenance, including gravel and winter plowing, and asked the Village to respect the private property rights of residents.

Robert Hamm 4925 64th Ave.

Mr. Hamm addressed the Board regarding planned road improvements in the Valley View neighborhood. He expressed appreciation for the project, noting the roads have required repairs for many years.

He raised concern about the intersection at 50th Street and 64th Avenue, specifically the proposal to widen a sharp corner. He stated that the current narrow configuration helps slow traffic and expressed concern that widening the roadway could lead to increased speeds and create safety issues for pedestrians.

He also expressed a preference for curb and gutter improvements throughout the neighborhood, acknowledging the potential cost and that it may not be feasible.

In closing, he thanked the Board for moving forward with the road improvements and asked that his concerns be considered during the planning process.

President and Trustee Comments

Trustee Harbach inquired about the status of draft environmental documentation related to the Red Oak Ridge matter west of I-94, noting that a preliminary report or correspondence had been expected. Staff responded that a report had not yet been received, but a link to the Public Service Commission (PSC) case is available on the Village website for reference. It was noted that a response deadline of May 26 was mentioned, and staff will follow up to confirm details.

Trustee Harbach also reported speaking with Senator Johnson regarding the possibility of establishing local postal routes. He indicated the matter appeared favorable and may be under consideration, though no formal update was provided.

Trustee Ostby requested that, at the next work session, staff provide a recap of lessons learned from the recent referendum, including information from the Village's communications consultant regarding similar public safety referendums and their outcomes. He noted the importance of this review as the Board considers whether to proceed with the grant, given upcoming timelines.

He also requested that the issue of 7th Place paving be placed on the next work session agenda for further discussion.

Finally, Trustee Ostby expressed appreciation for the fire and EMS personnel being recognized and specifically commended Chief Andersen for his leadership, efforts on the referendum, and continued professionalism and dedication throughout everything.

Trustee Nelson agreed with Trustee Ostby

Trustee Fredrick expressed appreciation for public comments received at the meeting, noting that they are recorded and followed up on.

He agreed with Trustee Ostby to include Mr. Gallagher's concerns on a future agenda item for further discussion, referencing his own experience living on a nearby roadway and stating that the matter warrants additional review.

Trustee Fredrick also offered positive remarks regarding Chief Anderson, noting frequent communication and strong leadership, and expressed appreciation for the fire department staff being recognized.

President Stoner requested that the 7th Place matter be placed on the upcoming work session agenda, citing concerns that misinformation was presented and indicating it will be discussed further in an open format at the next meeting.

He provided an update from a recent contractor meeting, noting continued concerns regarding traffic on Highway E within the construction area. He stated he contacted the Sheriff's Department, which subsequently deployed a radar speed sign, and he expressed appreciation for the response.

He referenced materials distributed regarding Pleasant Prairie's response to the casino proposal and noted that Attorney Mike McDermott is representing an opposing group. He requested that the item be placed on the next work session agenda for discussion.

Finally, President Stoner stated he has spoken with city aldermen regarding a “merit” system and reported that they view it positively based on their experience. He encouraged Board members to consult with other municipal officials to better understand its application and effectiveness.

Somers Fire & Rescue Chief and Emergency Manager Ben Andersen present certificates of recognition to Village of Somers staff for going above and beyond responding to the Tornado that touched down in the Village on April 14, 2026.

Chief Andersen presented awards to the team members from Public Works and Public Safety who went above and beyond to help out during the tornado that touched down in the Village on April 14, 2026.

Action on Resolution 2026-012, a resolution in support of maintaining Sheridan Road as currently configured, with four lanes of traffic

Trustee Ostby moved to approve Resolution 2026-012, a resolution in support of maintaining Sheridan Road as currently configured, with four lanes of traffic

Seconded by Trustee Smith

Trustee Harbach stated concern regarding a roadway configuration and its impact on safety and traffic flow. He noted the number of mailboxes located along both the east and west sides of the road and expressed concern that reducing the roadway to two lanes would create safety issues due to frequent postal vehicle stops for mail delivery.

He further stated that such a configuration could impede traffic flow on the adjacent state highway and concluded that a four-lane configuration would be a safer option.

Motion carried 7-0 vote

Action on licensing agreement with Red Star Soccer Club for the use of Memorial Park Fields (agreement term April 1, 2026 through November 30, 2029).

Trustee Ostby moved to approve licensing agreement with Red Star Soccer Club for the use of Memorial Park Fields (agreement term April 1, 2026, through November 30, 2029).

Seconded by Trustee Harbach

Motion carried 7-0 vote

Action on applications for Recurring Special Event Licenses: Jerry Smith Farm, Petrifying Springs Beer Garden, and Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum

Trustee Harbach moved to approve recurring Special Event Licenses: Jerry Smith Farm, Petrifying Springs Beer Garden, and Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum

Seconded by Trustee Nelson

Motion carried. 6-0 Vote

Trustee Smith abstained

Action on Special Event permit for the Pritzker Museum to hold the 1st District Spring Conference for the American Legion on May 3, 2026, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and request to waive fees.

Trustee Nelson moved to approve Special Event permit for the Pritzker Museum to hold the 1st District Spring Conference for the American Legion on May 3, 2026, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and request to waive fees.

Seconded by Trustee Harbach

Motion carried. 7-0 vote

Action on Operator's Licenses: Randall Sparks, Martha Saad, Lynn Wilk, Jessica Fisher, Calie Perrault, Jay Herr, Jackson Villarreal, Rebecka Persons and Stewart Boynton

Trustee Harbach moved to approve Operator's Licenses: Randall Sparks, Martha Saad, Lynn Wilk, Jessica Fisher, Calie Perrault, Jay Herr, Jackson Villarreal, Rebecka Persons and Stewart Boynton

Seconded by Trustee Ostby

Motion carried. 7-0 vote

Motion to Adjourn

Trustee Harbach moved to adjourn at 6:07pm

Seconded by Trustee Nelson

Motion carried. 7-0 vote

These minutes were approved by the Village Board May 12, 2026. Wendy Burnette Clerk/Treasurer